

The NICHD Connection

April 2020

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NICHD Office of Education Welcomes Newest Members

The NICHD Office of Education supports the training needs of intramural scientists, fellows, and students at all levels. Since its establishment in 2004, the office has provided impactful academic support programs, mentorship, career guidance, and evaluation. To continue the forward momentum of these activities, the office has welcomed three new members to the mix:

Fady Hannah-Shmouni, MD, DABIM, FRCPC, Director of Graduate Medical Education

Triesta Fowler, MD, Director of Communication and Outreach

Monica Cooper, Program Specialist

Please join us in welcoming our newest members!

INTRODUCING FADY HANNAH-SHMOUNI, MD, DABIM, FRCPC

Dr. Fady Hannah-Shmouni has worn many hats for the NICHD. He's a clinical investigator in the Section on Endocrinology and Genetics, serving as principal investigator on two NICHD protocols; chief of the internal medicine, endocrinology, and genetics inpatient ward and outpatient endocrinology; and the associate program director of NIH's Inter-Institute Endocrinology & Metabolism Fellowship Program. In November 2019, Dr. Hannah-Shmouni donned a new hat as the Director of Graduate Medical Education (GME) in the NICHD Office of Education.

In his new role as GME director, Dr. Hannah-Shmouni hopes to empower trainees and develop innovative approaches to leadership and education. He oversees all four NICHD clinical training programs, ensuring strict compliance with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education requirements. At the same time, he manages the NICHD's

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Fady Hannah-Shmouni,
MD, DABIM, FRCPC

"In my role as Director of Graduate Medical Education, I hope to inspire and train future leaders in medicine and research. I am excited and look forward to serving NICHD and the intramural research program as a whole in creating and delivering professional development activities, leadership, and collaboration."

Letter from the Editor

With the emergence of COVID-19, much of our society has turned to doctors and scientists for guidance on how to proceed through this challenging time. Many friends and family have said: "You're a scientist, is this really that bad?" During a time of uncertainty, they want a trusted source of information to help them make educated decisions.

Before, during, and after COVID-19, the public has and will turn to our biomedical workforce for leadership and direction. The NICHD Office of Education will continue to support our piece of that workforce, NICHD intramural scientists, to help grow a robust scientific body moving forward.

Recently, the Office of Education has welcomed [three new members](#) to support the program: Fady Hannah-Shmouni, MD, DABIM, FRCPC, Director of Graduate Medical Education; Triesta Fowler, MD, Director of Communication and Outreach; and Monica Cooper, Program Specialist. All three have extensive experience in biomedical research and will serve as valuable sources of information for our intramural trainees.

If you have an interest in scientific training and support as a career, check out this month's ["Former Fellow Follow-up" with Dr. Megan Bohn](#), Assistant Director for Postdoctoral Affairs at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She offers guidance for current trainees who would like to pursue a similar career option.

Lastly, don't forget to visit our newest addition to the newsletter, the ["Clinical Corner."](#) This month we introduce our current clinical Institutes and Centers (IC) representative to the Fellows Committee, Dr. Jessica Zolton.

I wish everyone well, and please know the value of your knowledge and insight.

Onward.

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Please send comments and questions to our editor at shana.spindler@nih.gov.

NICHD Office of Education Welcomes Newest Members

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Physician-Scientist Development program, which recruits and supports early career physician scientists to help foster their career development while meeting the goals of NICHD's Strategic Plan.

Fellows might be surprised to learn that in addition to all of his NICHD endeavors, Dr. Hannah-Shmouni has a history as a professional dancer. When he wasn't in the lab or at the bedside, he fundraised for hospitals through dance performances for nearly a decade. His breadth of research and life experiences position Dr. Hannah-Shmouni to serve as an engaging and effective GME director.

INTRODUCING TRIESTA FOWLER, MD

Dr. Triesta Fowler is the first Director of Communication and Outreach in the NICHD Office of Education. She will be responsible for enhancing the outreach and recruitment efforts for DIR laboratories and training programs, specifically leading DIR diversity initiatives. She will also have critical involvement in intramural grants administration, trainee professional development, individual mentoring, and coordination with the NICHD Office of Communication.

As of one her first initiatives, Dr. Fowler has generated the NICHD Office of the Scientific Director *News Bulletin*. The bulletin is a monthly publication that will ensure important information is circulated to all NICHD Division of Intramural Research staff and scientists. She will also lend her communication and editing expertise to *The NICHD Connection*.

Dr. Fowler attended the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University, followed by a pediatric residency at the Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children. Before joining the NICHD Office of Education, Dr. Fowler served as a medical officer in the NICHD Office of Communications for 13 years. There she created and led the National Child and Maternal Health Education Program. She recently completed a detail assignment in the Office of the Vice President for Research at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS), where she created an obesity prevention and treatment curricula for military families and served as a scientific review officer for USUHS grant review.

Dr. Fowler's unique combination of clinical and communication experiences position her to provide valuable insight to fellows who are exploring the breadth of career opportunities available.

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Triesta Fowler, MD

“Maya Angelou said, “When you learn, teach, and when you get, give.” Being able to achieve my goals as a physician is a gift that was nurtured by many throughout my journey. In this position as the Director of Communications and Outreach, I am committed to reaching out to young physicians and scientists and making them aware of the great opportunity to train at NICHD. I also want to make an impact by increasing the participation of individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the biomedical and clinical sciences in our training programs.”



Monica Cooper

“I have always loved science and teaching. When I worked as a biologist, I always sought out opportunities to train, mentor, and teach students about science. I am excited to work in the NICHD Office of Education to assist the high school students and postbaccalaureate fellows in achieving their career goals.”

NICHD Office of Education Welcomes Newest Members

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INTRODUCING MONICA COOPER

Monica Cooper, the NICHD Office of Education's newest program specialist, has over 20 years of experience as a biologist at the NIH. In her most recent position in the laboratory of Dr. James Kennison, she co-authored three publications on the molecular genetic analysis of genetic regions in fruit flies. In addition to her bench work, publications, and presentations to colleagues, Ms. Cooper played a critical role in training postbacs and summer students. In particular, she presented the "What's in an Eye?" activity for students at the NIH's annual Take Your Child to Work Day.

Prior to coming to the NIH, Ms. Cooper was a high school biology teacher for six years. As a teacher, she generated and led interactive biology lessons that she reinforced with laboratory activities. Ms. Cooper received her Bachelor's degree in biology from Hampton University.

Former Fellow Follow-up with Dr. Megan Bohn

Dr. Megan Bohn is Assistant Director for Postdoctoral Affairs at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. But she didn't jump into that role straight out of postdoctoral work. First, she served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Georgetown University, followed by Academic Program Manager in her current office. While a fellow at the NICHD, she worked with Dr. Karl Pfeifer from 2011 to 2015, researching molecular mechanisms of gene expression of the imprinted gene cluster H19/Igf2.

Check out our Q&A with Dr. Bohn to learn more about her transition into a postdoctoral affairs office



Megan Bohn, PhD

Q: *Did you always know that you wanted to have a leadership role in shaping postdoctoral training? What led you to this career path?*

A: I did not initially begin my science career with a specific eye on postdoctoral training, but I did always know that I wanted to shape higher education in the sciences. Throughout my education and training as a biochemist, I gravitated toward roles that allowed me to develop my teaching and academic leadership skills at undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels.

Q: Can you tell us a little about the role of an assistant director in a postdoctoral affairs office?

A: My primary duties center around analyzing and improving training for postdoctoral fellows and developing or co-developing new training in collaboration with other offices and teams in the university. I provide individualized career counseling to fellows. On the administrative side of the work, I also participate in helping shape postdoctoral policies. Much of my work is to actively manage communications with the fellows and maintain positive relationships with the various university stakeholders that affect postdoctoral training.

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Former Fellow Follow-up with Dr. Megan Bohn

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Q: What do you find most exciting about being an assistant director?

A: When I've helped postdoctoral fellows get to where they want to go in life or I've empowered them to solve a major problem in their careers, I feel like my work has meaning.

Q: What do you find most challenging?

A: Actually, it's the same answer to the previous question.

Q: *Is there a moment that stands out as particularly rewarding during your time in the Postdoctoral Affairs Office at Johns Hopkins?*

A: I recently adapted the concepts behind design thinking/life design to run a 90-minute workshop for postdoctoral fellows to develop action plans for managing their careers. I was nervous about doing this because there are some aspects of life design that don't seem compatible with the postdoc experience, but the energy, engagement, and feedback from the participants of the workshop turned out to be quite positive. I feel like that meeting made an impact on the attendees.

Q: *Where do you seek out mentorship for your career development?*

A: I make it a point to seek about mentorship on small levels from as many people as possible, be that other mentors, my old bosses, or new people who are doing something I would like to learn about. I have recently gone back to seek advice from NIH OITE staff.

Q: *What activities or resources at NIH helped prepare you for your career transition?*

A: NIH OITE as well as the NICHD Office of Education.

Q: *Do you have any advice for fellows who are thinking about entering a similar career field?*

A: Volunteer or do a work detail in this area. Get as much exposure as you can to the people doing this kind of work. Attend the National Postdoctoral Association annual conference. Look back on your past experiences: do you have teaching and leadership experience in an academic setting that qualifies you for this type of work?

If you have additional questions for Dr. Bohn, please email her at msampl14@jhmi.edu.

Clinical Corner: Meet Dr. Jessica Zolton, Clinical Fellow Rep to NIH FelCom

I am a third-year clinical fellow in the Department of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) at NICHD. While there are numerous opportunities at NIH, it may be difficult to navigate due to the significant size and complexities inherent to such a large institution.

I became a member of the NIH Fellows Committee (FelCom) to increase my involvement in the NIH community and to serve as a bridge between the basic science and clinical fellows. I encourage all fellows to consider becoming a member of FelCom to enrich your fellowship experience, build professional relationships, and discuss policies and programs that impact fellowship training.

I am a native of Northeastern Ohio and earned my Bachelor of Science degree at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I attended Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) in Erie, Pennsylvania and quickly discovered that I was destined for a life in the field of obstetrics and gynecology.

During my OBGYN residency at Summa Akron City Hospital, I became increasingly interested in the ever-evolving specialty that is REI. The issues encountered in patients with infertility may be genetic, anatomical, or endocrine-based, and clinical practice is constantly evolving due to the work of dedicated reproductive scientists and advances in technology and lab protocols.

My interest led me to complete an academic fellowship in OBGYN at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. I came to NIH as a staff gynecologist where my position evolved to clinical fellow the following year. I have been at NIH for almost four years. I am grateful to have the support of my wonderful husband, Devon, and my curious boys, Graham, 4, and Leo, 2, who are constantly discovering the world around them, not unlike the scientists at the NIH.

An Institutes and Centers (IC) clinical representative is a postdoctoral-level fellow who serves on the NICHD Fellows Committee on behalf of the institute's fellow population. In general, most institutes have one basic science representative and one clinical representative. Representative appointments last for 12 months and can be renewed for an additional year. The rep also serves on the NIH-wide FelCom on our behalf.

Responsibilities of the IC representative include attending all scheduled FelCom meetings, participating on a subcommittee, disseminating information to the fellows in the IC, communicating concerns to the committee from the IC's fellows, and coordinating the distribution of information via subcommittees.

*Clinical
Corner*



Jessica Zolton, DO

The Rep Report

By Anshika Jain, PhD

As the current NICHD Basic Sciences Institutes and Centers (IC) Representative, I represent NICHD postdoctoral fellows at the Fellows Committee (FelCom) meeting every month and share the latest news with you here. Do you have a concern or question that you want brought up at the next meeting? Contact me at anshika.jain@nih.gov!

The Office of Intramural Research announced a raise of 3.5% for all IRTA, CRTA and Visiting Fellows effective May 1, 2020.

No other April events to announce at this time.

Stay safe, everyone!



Anshika Jain, PhD

Weathering the Storm and Finding a New Normal

Adjusting to all the changes and adjustments in response to the COVID-19 crisis can be very stressful. Please know that along with the OITE, the NICHD Office of Education is still here for you! We will continue to offer individual career advising sessions over the phone and/or virtually using Skype, WebEx or Zoom. So feel free to reach out directly to Drs. Pittman and Walsh (erin.walsh@nih.gov, yvette.pittman@nih.gov) to set up an appointment. We will make you aware of any web-based activities and resources for your research training and career development. Staff from the Office of Education will also be conducting engaging virtual sessions on a variety of topics to help with your personal and professional growth.



Here are a few best practices that you can use to help maximize your scientific productivity while teleworking:

- » Keep open communication with your PI, meet regularly by teleconference
- » Participate in group journal clubs, if made available using WebEx
- » Complete your Science Careers myIDP profile (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org>)
- » Establish a routine and focus on various writing tasks: manuscripts, reviews, updates to lab protocols
- » Make time to catch up on the literature within your field
- » Participate in career development webinars (offered by various sources, including BioCareers, OITE, AAMC, and SciPhD)
- » Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals for the next six months related to your chosen career path (networking opportunities, updating your LinkedIn profile, etc.)
- » Consider applying for a funding opportunity (or writing a grant proposal with your mentor)
- » Finalize your application materials for various job opportunities (CV, cover letters, research statement and teaching philosophy)
- » Search for jobs you may be interested in, to see what credentials are required and possible job duties
- » Plan and prioritize future experiments with your lab colleagues and/or mentor
- » Keep an eye out for summer FAES online courses and workshops to be advertised in April. A few online workshops are currently available in May (<https://faes.org/workshops-conferences>).

Remember the NICHD Office of Education is here for you!

April Announcements

PLEASE NOTE: We encourage you to check online for cancellations due to the ongoing COVID-19 related event restrictions.



CHECK IT OUT: SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT WITH DR. BIANCHI

The latest addition to the NICHD Office of Communication's "Women in Science" series highlights the impressive career of **NICHD Director Dr. Diana Bianchi**. Learn how she followed her interests in pediatric health and medical genetics across the country and back, changing the landscape of neonatal and pediatric medicine along the way.



Diana Bianchi, MD

OFFICE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION (OITE) CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Online Initiatives for Trainees

The OITE is in the process of moving all wellness activities to online platforms. Watch the **WHAT'S NEW** column on the [OITE homepage](#) for updates. Also, remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will continue to be available to help you work through any difficulties you experience. You can reach the EAP at 301-496-3164.

The OITE will ensure you have continued access to OITE staff members during the coming weeks, and they are willing to meet virtually by phone, Skype, WebEx, or other electronic platform. We will continue to follow the regular process for making career counseling appointments. You can find all of this information at www.training.nih.gov.

If you cannot access your NIH email account from outside the NIH, please take a moment to go to <https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/20/1802> and provide your personal email address. The OITE will use the information to create a trainee listserv that they will use to communicate with you during this time.

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April Announcements

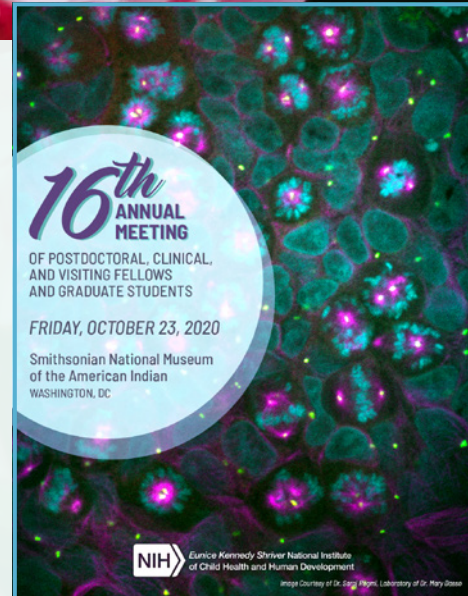
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POSTPONED: ANNUAL NICHD FELLOWS MEETING

The 16th Annual Meeting for Postdoctoral, Clinical, and Visiting Fellows and Graduate Students has been postponed until **Friday, October 23, 2020**. This year's retreat will be held at The National Museum of the American Indian.

This meeting will allow you to step away from the lab for a day to network with your NICHD colleagues, participate in a career exploration session, and learn more about the recent developments in our intramural research programs.

More details to follow!



ARE YOU A BUDDING PHOTOGRAPHER? CHECK THIS OUT

The NICHD Office of Education is seeking a fellow with photography experience for October's fellows retreat. Your photography of the event will appear in the retreat recap issue of *The NICHD Connection* later this year. If you are interested, please contact Nicki Swan (jonasnic@mail.nih.gov) for additional details.



2020 NIH POSTBAC POSTER DAY UPDATE

The face-to-face 2020 Postbac Poster Day has been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. However, NIH is scheduling **virtual Poster Days from April 28th through April 30th**. The virus outbreak has led to the cancellation of many important events for the NIH community. We invite you to help make sure this event, rather than being cancelled, is the best postbac poster day ever!

All current NIH Postbacs are encouraged to present at this virtual event. **The deadline for postbacs to submit poster titles for Postbac Poster Day 2020 is Tuesday, March 31st, at 5:00 pm.**

https://www.training.nih.gov/virtual_postbac_poster_day

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April Announcements

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GAIN PROGRAMMING SKILLS WHILE TELEWORKING FROM HOME

During this time of extended telework, the NICHD's Bioinformatics and Scientific Programming Core (BSPC) is offering to help fellows gain valuable programming and data analysis skills. BSPC can provide several resources for learning the R programming language as well as develop custom learning plans using online resources to meet specific learning goals.

You can start learning the R programming language directly in a web browser at <https://rstudio.cloud/learn/primers>. If you want to progress further, you can use the free online book <https://r4ds.had.co.nz> as a guide.

If you are interested in programming and data analysis, please contact Ryan Dale at ryan.dale@nih.gov. He can work with you directly or coordinate with others in BSPC to schedule "virtual office hours" to help you understand how these skills fit into your research or to help with installation issues and coordination with IT.

JAPAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE (JSPS) ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR NIH INTRAMURAL FELLOWSHIP

The NIH Intramural Fellowship was created in 1995 to promote bilateral cooperation between NIH and the JSPS Foundation. This partnership-based program is primarily funded by the JSPS Foundation with co-funding from the NIH host IC. JSPS is the largest government-supported foundation in Japan that provides fellowships to Japanese scientists.

The NIH-JSPS Intramural Fellowship provides a two-year stipend to Japanese postdocs to work at NIH intramural labs. This fellowship is awarded to about 10 postdocs annually.

For more information about the fellowship and application documents, please visit <https://jpspsusa.org/wp/fellowship/kaitoku-nih>. The application due date is **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31, 2020**.

ONGOING EVENTS AROUND CAMPUS

NIH-Wide Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) Events

For more information and registration, please visit [Upcoming OITE Events](#).

NIH Library Training and Events

For more information and registration, please visit the [NIH Library Calendar](#). In-person classes are held in the NIH Library Training Rooms, Clinical Center, Building 10, and webinars are held online.

April Events

TUESDAY-THURSDAY, APRIL 28-30

Virtual Postbac Poster Day

Postbac Poster Day is your opportunity to share the research you have been conducting at the NIH and at the same time develop your communication and networking skills. We encourage all current NIH Postbacs to present at this virtual event.

For more information, please visit

www.training.nih.gov/virtual_postbac_poster_day.

NO UPCOMING IN-PERSON EVENTS

Check out the suggested activities from the NICHD Office of Education on [page 9](#)!

